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## Edged Out: Location Efficient Housing and Low Income Households in the Portland Region

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# Edged Out

**Location Efficient Housing and Low Income Households in the Portland  
Region**

**Andree Tremoulet, PhD & Ryan Dann**

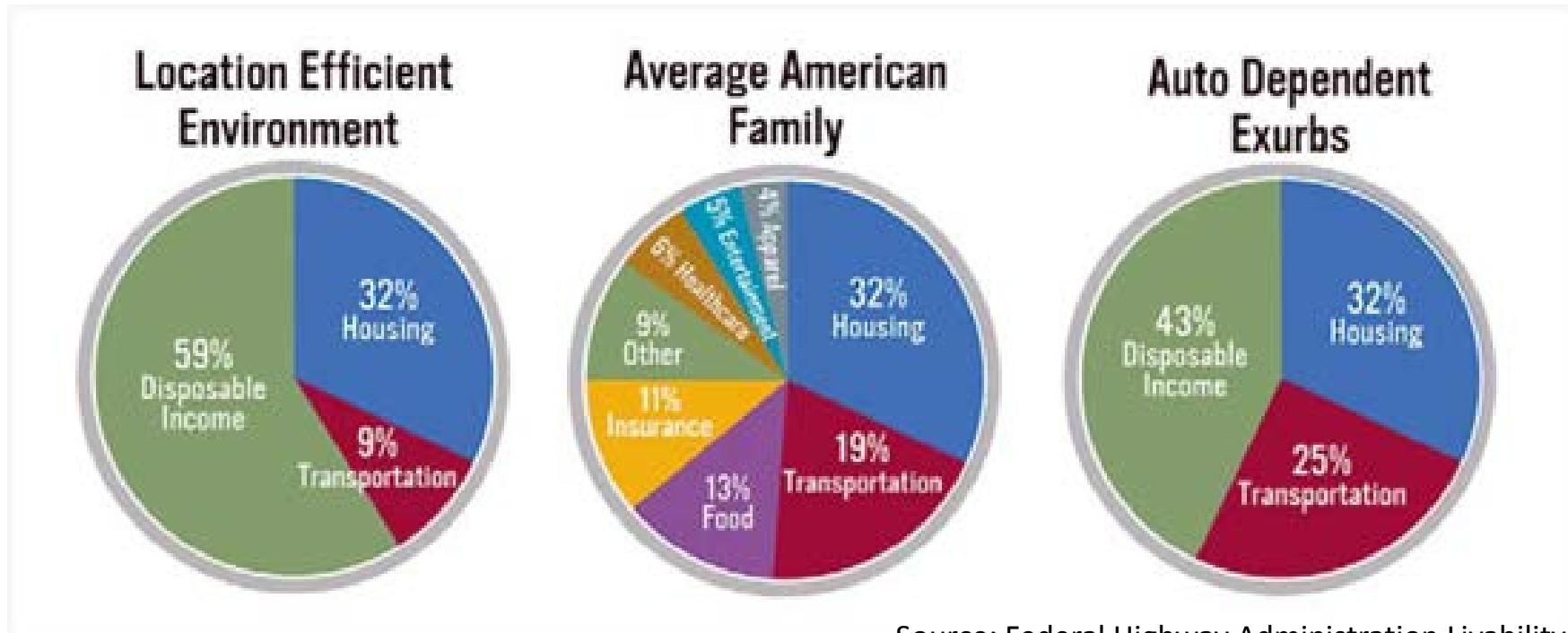
**Center for Urban Studies, Portland State University**

**with Arlie Adkins, PhD, University of Arizona**



# Transportation Costs & Built Environment

Where You Live Matters



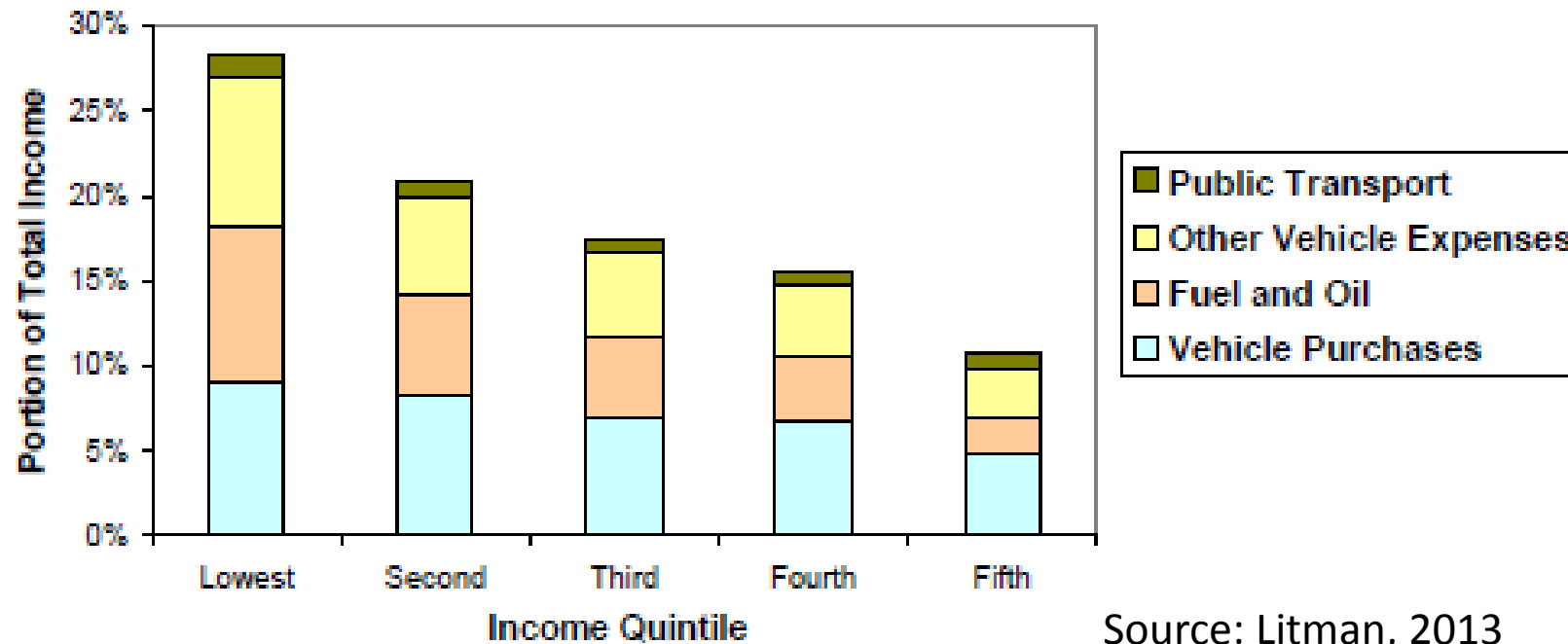
Source: Federal Highway Administration Livability Initiative

## Location Affordability

Housing + Transportation Costs = The Combined Cost of Place

# Who Needs Location Affordable Housing?

Figure 4 Transport Expenditures (BLS 2007)



Source: Litman, 2013

*Households with low incomes have the most to gain from lowering their transportation costs.*

# What Are Housing Choice Vouchers?

- Largest housing subsidy program for low-income Americans.
- Participants find modest, qualifying housing; voucher pays for portion of rent.
  - Participant typically pays 30 – 40% of income for housing costs.
- Approximately 15,000 vouchers in metro area in 2012. But demand far exceeds supply.

## Roles and Relationships



# What Are Housing *Choice* Vouchers?

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  - Participant typically pays 30 – 40% of income for housing costs.
- Approximately 15,000 vouchers in metro area in 2012. But demand *far* exceeds supply.
- ***Competing with other renters for available apartments.***

## Roles and Relationships



# Today's Presentation

Project Overview: Purpose and Elements

Toolkit Development Process

Evaluation of Effectiveness

Regional Access to Location Efficient Housing by HCV Participants

Conclusion

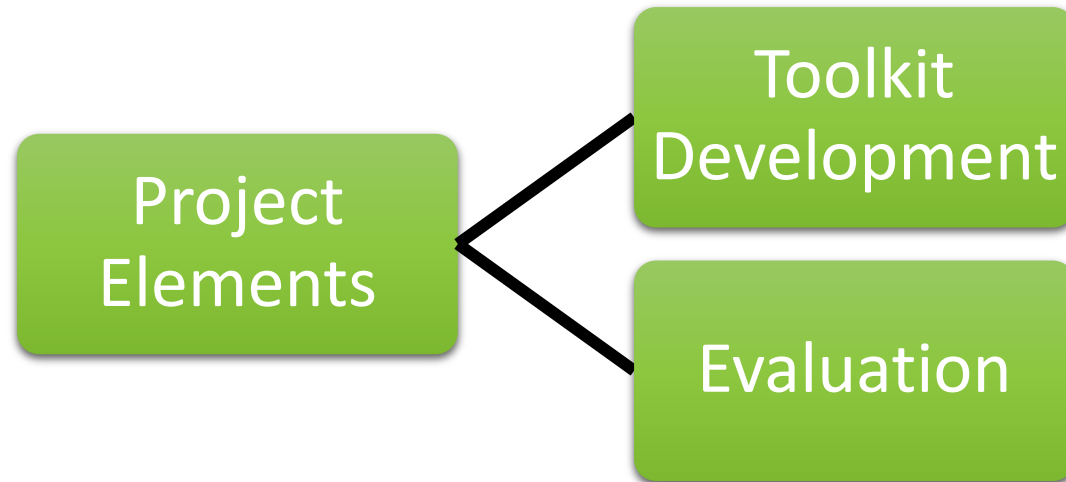


# Toolkit Design & Evaluation

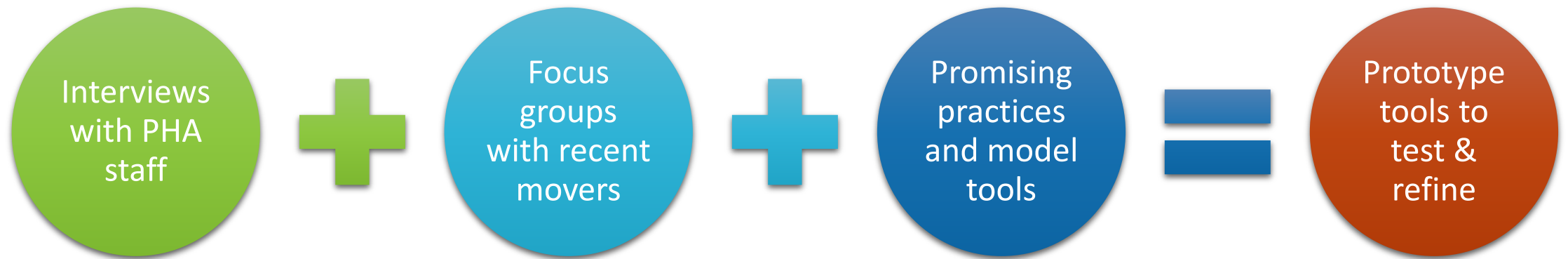


# Project Overview

Goal: To help households with housing vouchers contain or reduce their transportation costs by accessing location efficient housing when they move.



# Toolkit Development Process



# Focus Groups

6 focus groups  
4 PHAs  
17 individuals

How does *housing location* figure into the decision-making process of voucher holders who move, if at all?

What role does *location efficiency* play in moves?

## Location

- Location mattered to some movers
- Search methods and tools

## Location Efficiency

- Personally efficient locations
- Location efficiency secondary

# Walk Score Apartment Finder

Walk Score® Cities & Neighborhoods Find Rentals Why It Matters Professional Log in

Find rentals: Type an address, neighborhood or city Go

Clear Filters Price & Beds My Commutes Gotta Have... Public Transit Neighborhoods

Results Sort: Featured

Price: \$0 - \$5000+ Bedrooms: Studio - 5+ More options

- ☐ Dogs
- ☐ Cats
- ☒ Require Photos
- ☐ Show Hidden Listings
- ☐ Only Show Houses

Results:

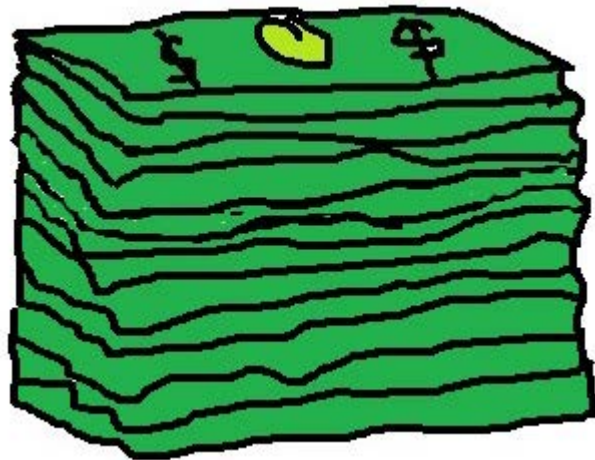
- \$685-\$750**  
Waverly  
1-3 beds  
28 mins  
Walk Score: 68
- \$750**  
East Park Place  
2 beds  
29 mins  
Walk Score: 68
- \$1,330-\$2,434**  
2121 Belmont  
1-2 beds  
Buckman  
26 mins
- \$675-\$856**  
Reflections at Happy Valley  
Studio  
27 mins  
Walk Score: 65
- \$701-\$1,005**  
The Ellington  
Studio  
Madison South  
22 mins
- \$750-\$1,150**  
Fairmont Villa Apartments  
1-3 beds  
Parkrose Heights  
20 mins
- \$1,480-\$1,575**  
Access 15  
1-2 beds  
Lloyd  
26 mins

Map

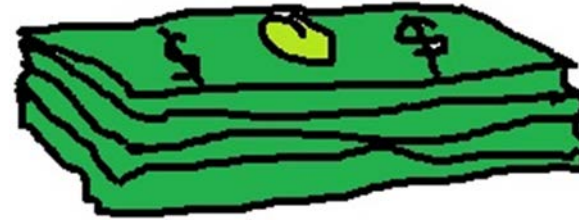
© 2013 Walk Score Feedback iPhone App Map data ©2013 Google Terms of Use Report a map error

# Introductory Video

*Bye, bye money...*



Rent



Insurance



Repairs



Bus  
pass



Gas

Transportation



# Other Elements



## LOOKING FOR A PLACE TO LIVE?

### Think bigger than just the home

When you choose a place to live, you're choosing more than a safe, affordable space for you and your family.

You're also choosing a neighborhood that meets your family's needs. You're choosing schools, stores, medical providers, job commutes and many other things that affect how much time and money you'll spend on transportation.

### Why consider transportation now?

In our area, transportation costs about 30% of what families with housing assistance earn each month. For many, that's about as much as your housing costs.



Housing

Transportation

Everything else in your LIFE!!!



## Transportation + Housing Cost Comparison Worksheet Here's an example

Home 1 Address: 98765 Marshmallow Drive				Home 2 Address: 1234 Main Street		
1. Name 3 places you go often.	work	Sister's house	grocery	1. Name 3 places you go often.	work	Sister's house
2. How will you get there? (Bus, walk, drive, etc.)	car	car	car	2. How will you get there? (Bus, walk, drive, etc.)	bus	walk
3. Number of times per week you go to each	5	4	3	3. Number of times per week you go to each	5	4
4. Miles from your home www.maps.google.com	4.2	18.3	1.5	4. Miles from your home www.maps.google.com	6.8	.2
5. Round trip miles per month = 8 x (#3 x #4)	168	585.6	36	5. Round trip miles per month = 8 x (#3 x #4)	272	6.4
6. Cost per month • Car = 30 cents/mile (.3) • Bus = Transit fares • Walk = No cost	\$50.40	\$175.68	\$10.80	6. Cost per month • Car = 30 cents/mile (.3) • Bus = Transit fares • Walk = No cost	\$100 monthly bus pass	0
YOUR TRANSPORTATION COST EACH MONTH Add the three columns			\$256.88	YOUR TRANSPORTATION COST EACH MONTH Add the three columns		
7. How long to get there? www.maps.google.com	20 minutes	35 minutes	10 minutes	7. How long to get there? www.maps.google.com	48 minutes	10 minutes
8. Round trip time per month = 8 x (#7)	800 minutes	1120 minutes	240 minutes	8. Round trip time per month = 8 x (#7)	1920 minutes	320 minutes
HOW LONG YOU SPEND TRAVELING PER MONTH to places you go often : Add the three columns, divide by 60			36 hours	HOW LONG YOU SPEND TRAVELING PER MONTH to places you go often : Add the three columns, divide by 60		
Compare your combined monthly housing and transportation costs and see how much of your income is left.						
	Your Income	Your Housing Cost from Section 8 estimate	Your Transportation Cost from above	Your Housing + Transportation Costs	What's Left	
Home 1	\$450	\$150	\$237	\$387	\$63	
Home 2	\$450	\$150	\$100	\$250	\$200	

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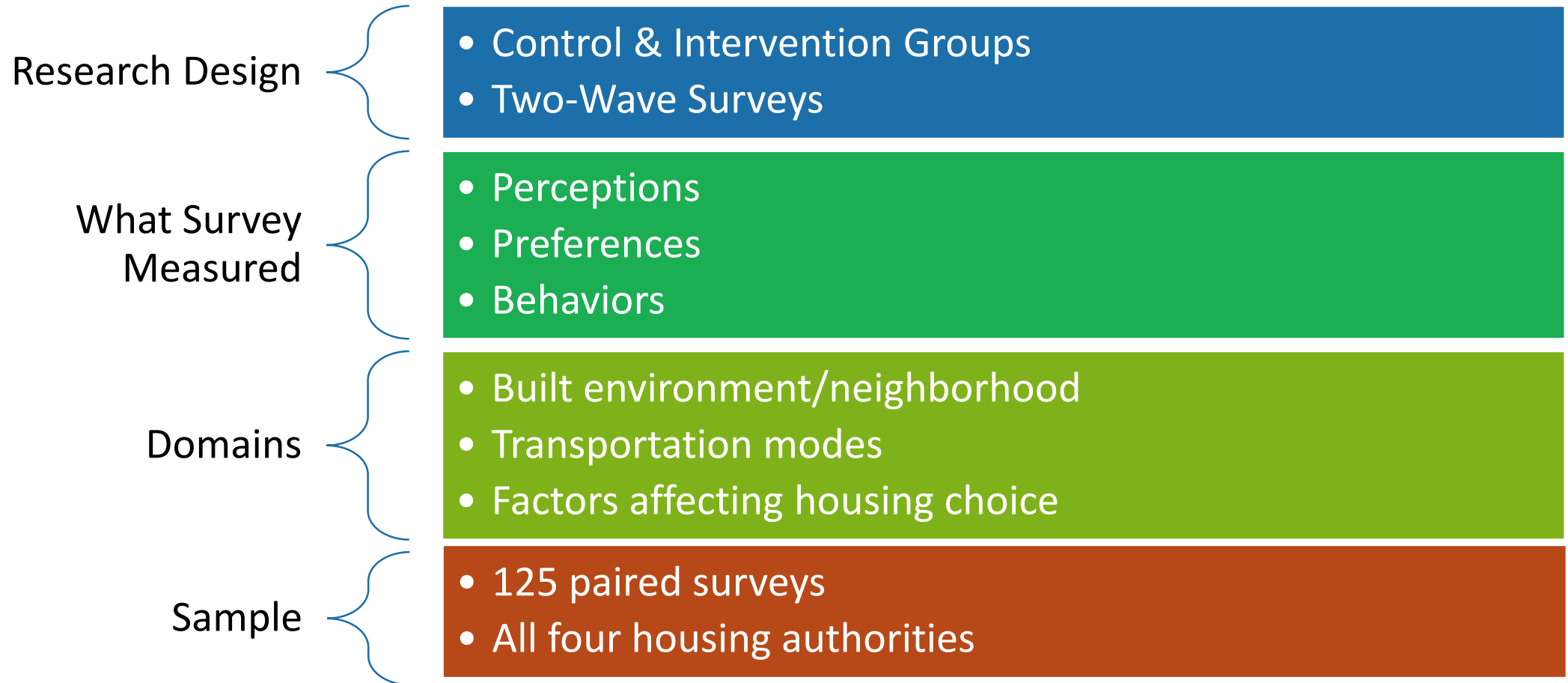


## CHECK IT OUT!

### Make Sure the Home Is Right for You



# Toolkit Evaluation



# Results

- Analysis

- Few significant differences found between control and intervention group
  - Intervention group had higher transit accessibility and lower housing costs after moving

- Limitations

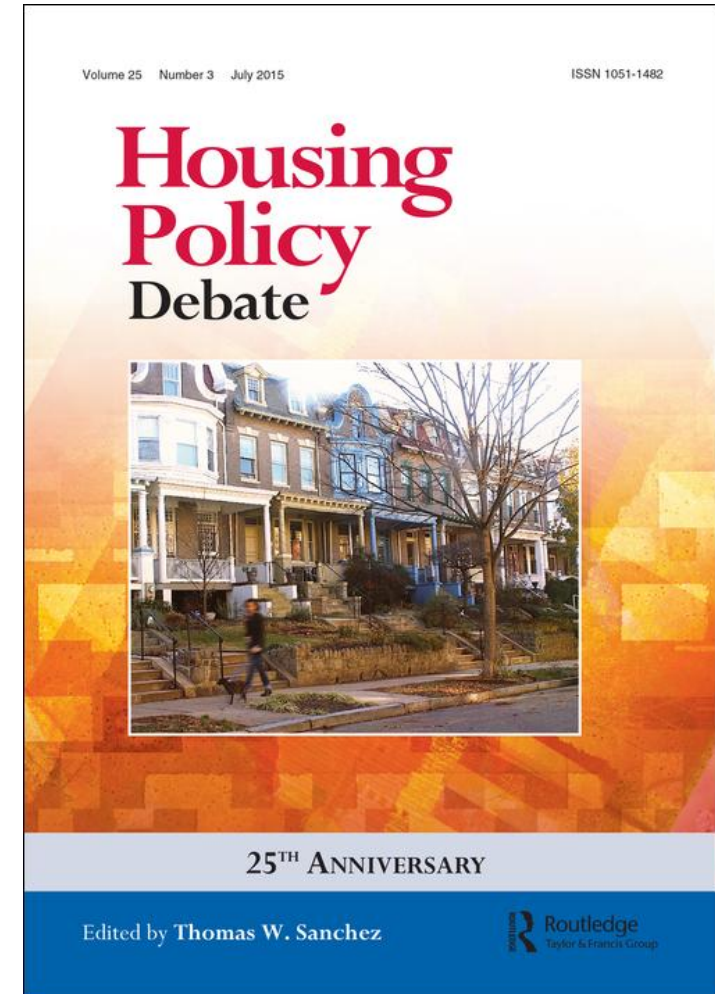
- Majority of movers had already decided to where move before intervention

- Conclusions

- Transportation is not a top-tier concern, for good reasons
- Toolkit may be more appropriate in other settings



# Additional Research



# Regional Access to Location Efficient Housing by HCV Participants

A mixed methods study to investigate the differences in location affordability and efficiency among 2,026 voucher recipients who moved within the Portland, Oregon region during 2012-13.

Tremoulet A, Dann R, & Adkins A. Moving to Location Affordability? Housing Choice Vouchers and Residential Relocation in the Portland, Oregon Region. Housing Policy Debate. In Press.

# Research Design

- How do the location efficiency and affordability outcomes of voucher holders who move within a city compare to those who move within the suburbs?
- How do the location efficiency and affordability outcomes of movers compare to non-movers?

## Study Dataset

- Time Period: 2012-2013
- 13,500 HCV participants from three housing authorities
  - 7,900 Home Forward, 3,200 Washington County, and 2,400 Vancouver
  - 11,000 non-movers and 2,000 movers
    - Movers: 1,100 in Portland and 900 in suburbs

# Quantitative Analysis

## Variables

- Location Affordability Index (LAI) -- U.S. DOT & U.S. HUD
  - Block-Group Level
  - Models transportation and housing costs
  - Various housing profiles
    - ‘Very-low income individual’ and ‘Single-parent family’ profiles
- Smart Location Database (SLD) – U.S. EPA
  - Location efficiency metrics at the Block-Group Level
    - Density, network connectivity, transit access, & employment
- Walk Score®
  - Address-specific metric

# Overview of All 13,500 Voucher Households

## *Comparing Portland & Suburban Voucher Households*

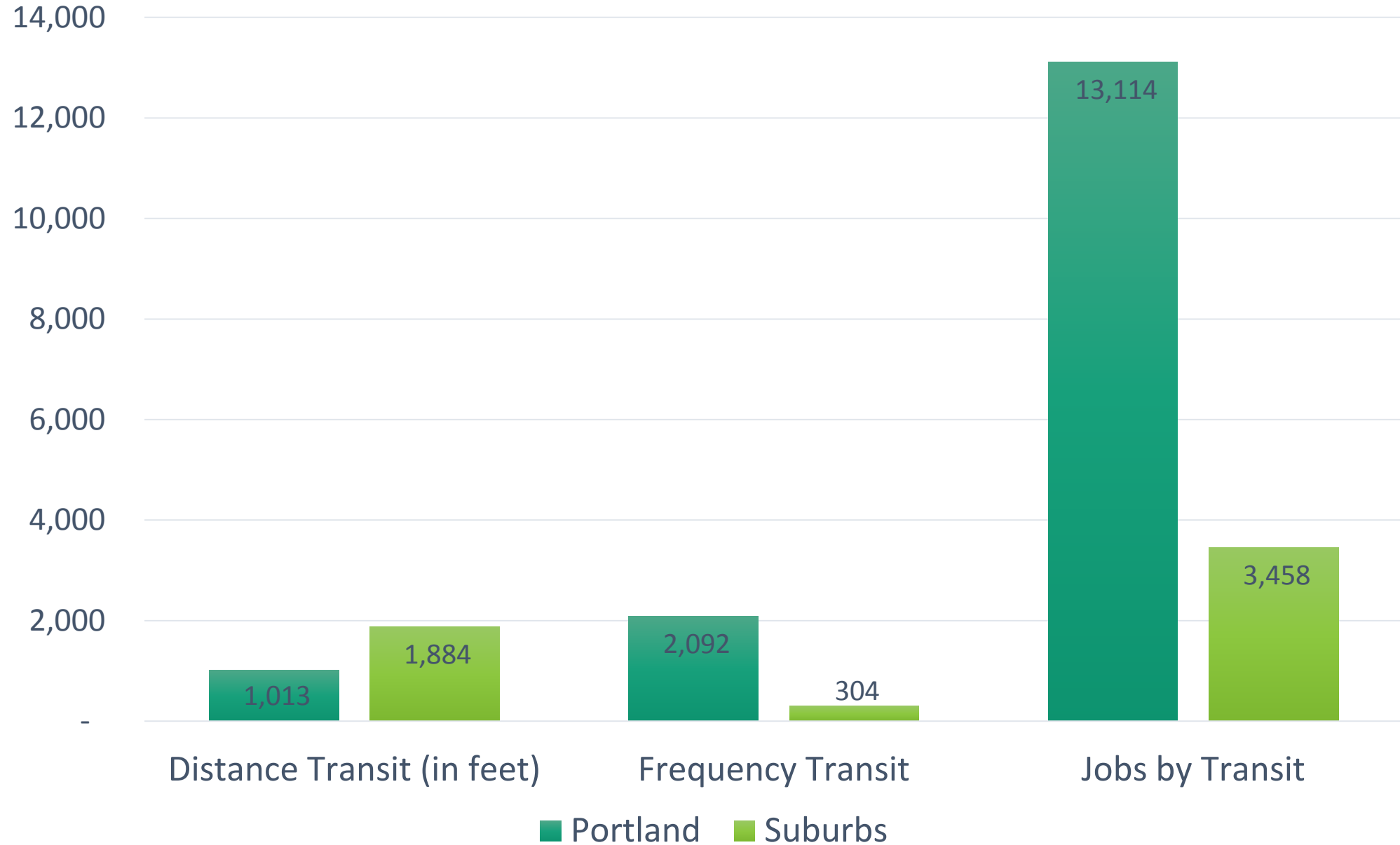
- Portland households lived in much higher location-efficient neighborhoods, all categories:  
Residential, Employment, Built Environment, & Transit
- Portland households lived in much higher location-affordable neighborhoods, both profiles:  
Very Low Income Individuals & Single Parent Families
- Portland households had higher Walk Scores (63.3 vs. 48.3)

## Smart Location Database Density Comparisons Portland vs. Suburbs



# Smart Location Database Comparison

## Portland vs. Suburbs



# Results: Spatial Analysis of Movers

## Portland Movers

- Moved to less location-efficient neighborhoods, all categories
  - Residential
  - Employment
  - Built Environment
  - Transit
- Moved to less location-affordable neighborhoods, both profiles
  - Very Low Income Individuals
  - Single Parent Families
- Lower Walk Score (61.3 to 56.7)

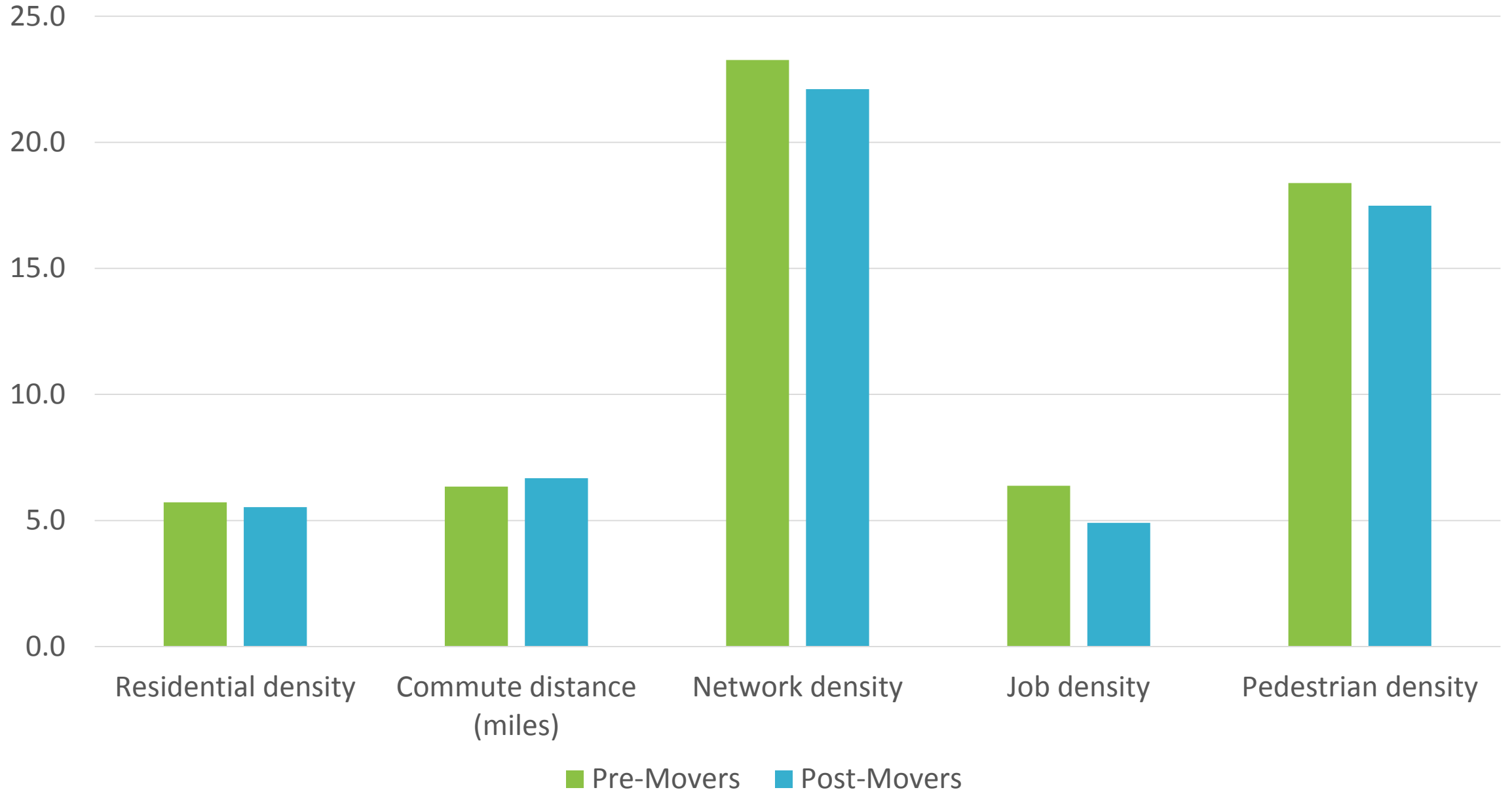
## Suburban Movers

- No significant difference in location efficiency, all categories & variables
- No significant difference in location affordability, neither profile
- No significant difference in Walk Score (45.3 to 45.7)



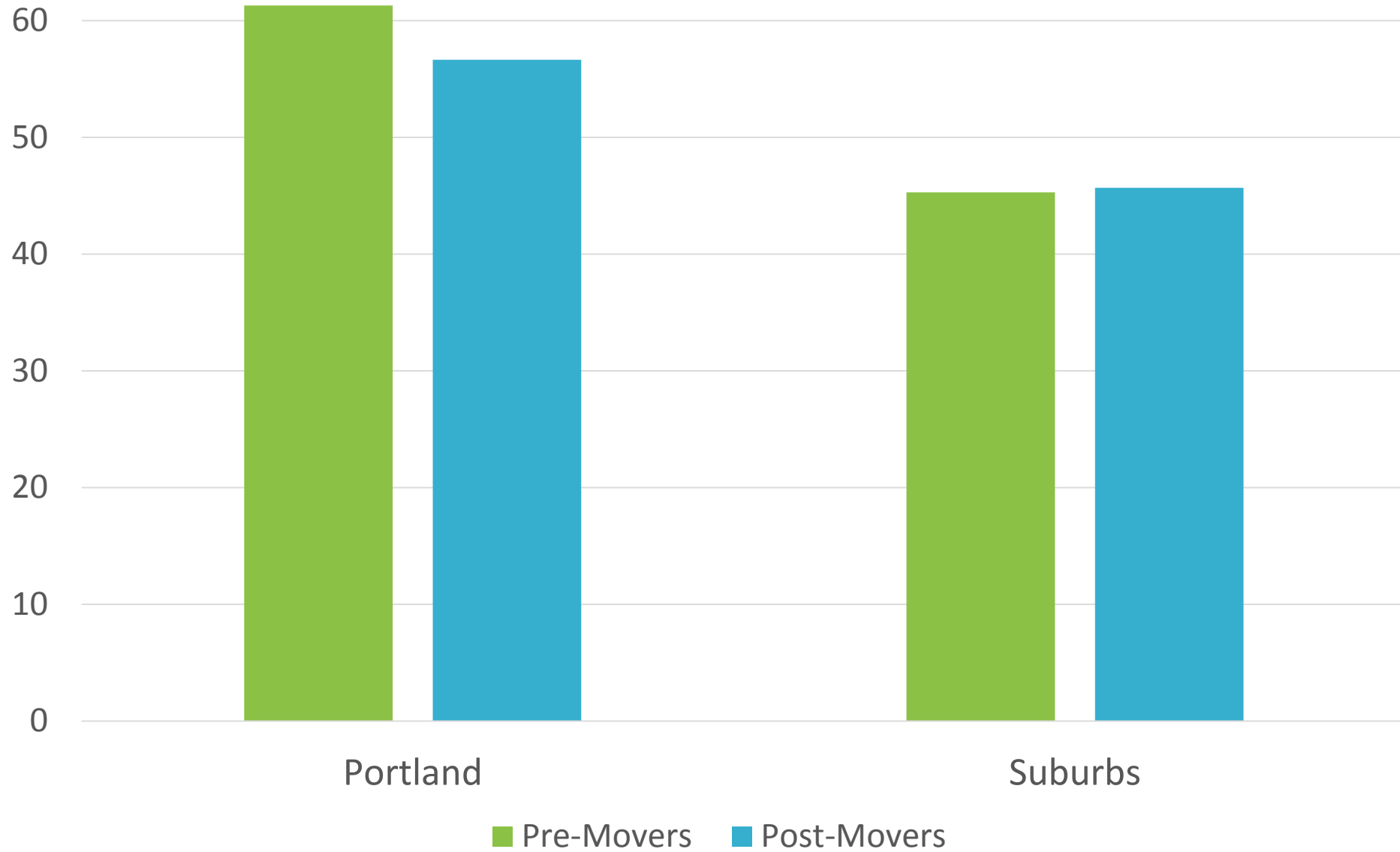
# Location Metric Comparisons

## Portland Movers



# Walk Score Comparisons

## Movers: Portland & Suburbs



# Results: Spatial Analysis of Movers vs. Non-Movers

## Within Portland

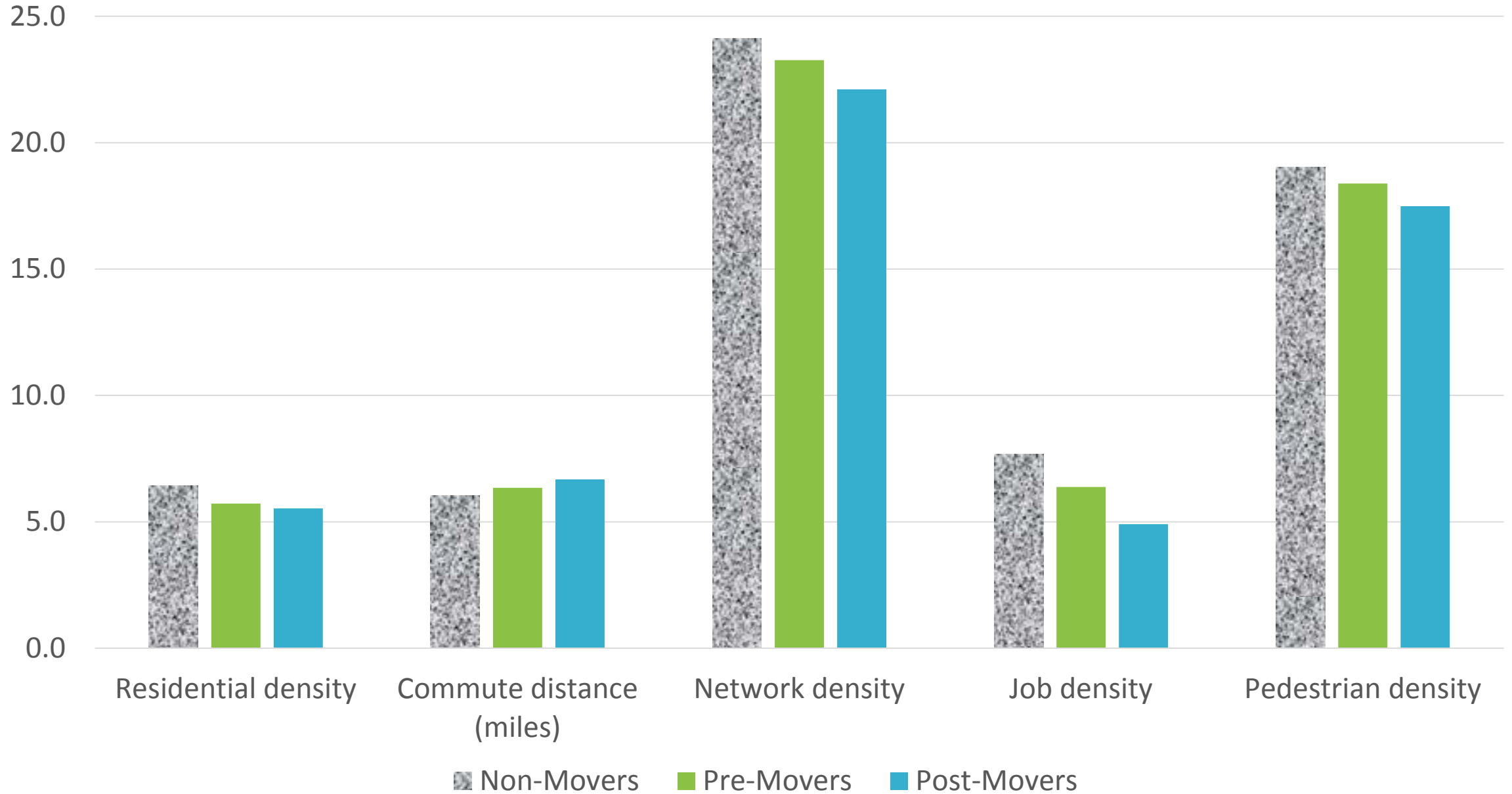
- Movers lived in less location-efficient neighborhoods, all categories
  - Residential
  - Employment
  - Built Environment
  - Transit
- Movers lived in less location-affordable neighborhoods, both profiles
  - Very Low Income Individuals
  - Single Parent Families
- Movers had lower Walk Score (63.6 to 56.7)

## Within Suburbs

- Movers lived in *slightly* less location-efficient neighborhoods, all categories
  - Employment
  - Built Environment
  - Transit
- Movers lived in less location-affordable neighborhoods, one profiles
  - Very Low Income Individuals
- Movers had lower Walk Score (48.9 to 45.7)

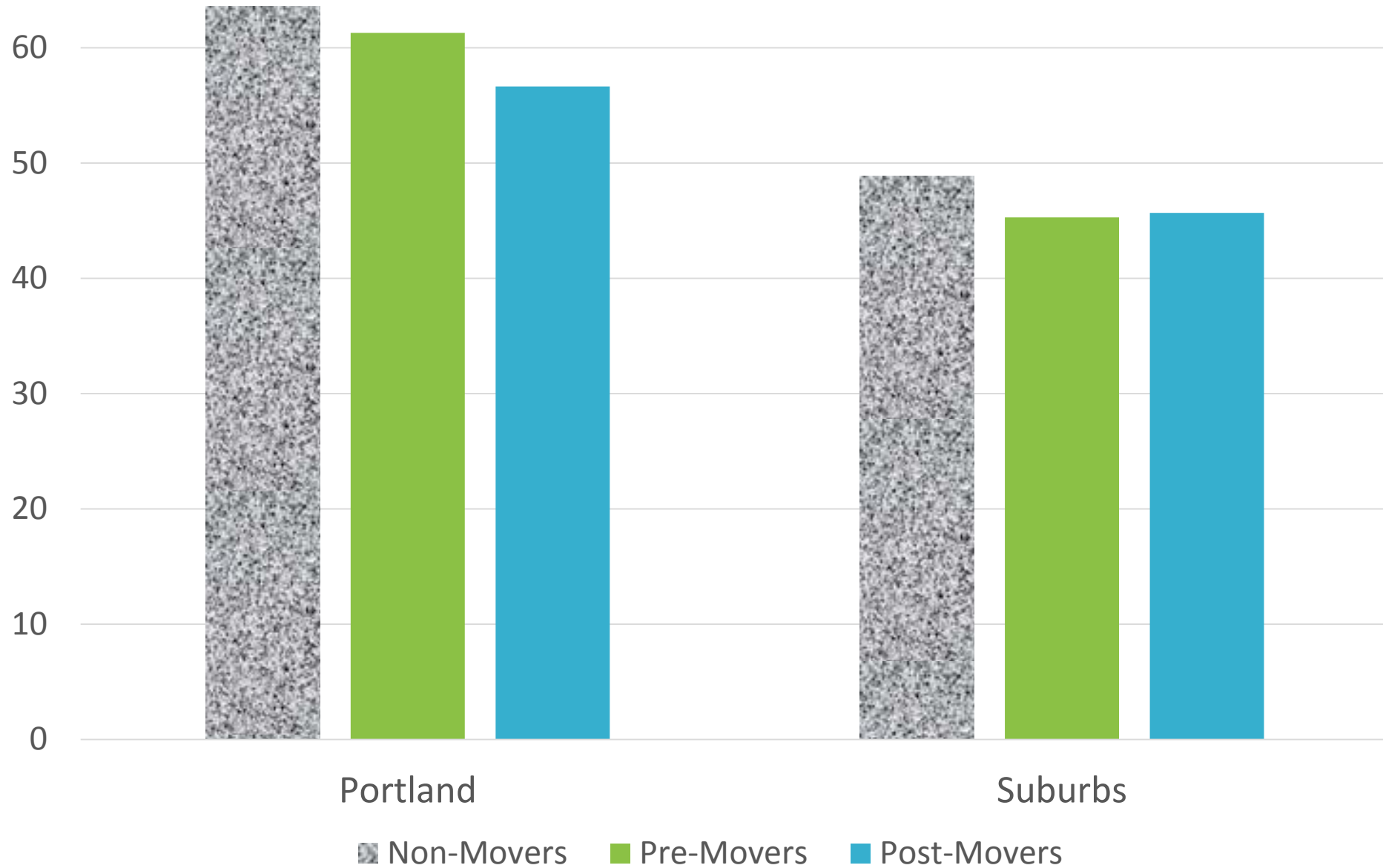
# Location Metric Comparisons

## Portland Non-Movers vs. Movers



# Walk Score Comparisons

## Non-Movers vs. Movers, Portland & Suburbs



# In Summary...

## **Movers**

- Moving tends to decrease transportation and employment options for low-income households in Portland.
- Moving may maintain (suburbs) or possibly increase (Portland) automobile dependency for low-income households.

## **Movers vs. Non-Movers**

- There are significant differences in transportation and employment options between those who move and those who stay in place throughout the metropolitan area.

# Policy Considerations

## **In a tight real estate market...**

- Importance of providing opportunities for residents to stay in place
- Market unaided not likely to produce location-efficient housing for lower income households
  - Those who need location-efficient housing are least likely to access it.
- Importance of supply side subsidies (LIHTC, etc.) and tools like inclusionary zoning to create affordable, lower cost location-efficient housing

# Products

- Toolkit: may be effective in housing markets providing greater choice
- Tech transfer: toolkit provided to “partner agencies”
- Rich database: housing and transportation preferences of low-income voucher holders
- Article in forthcoming issue of *Housing Policy Debate* (Spring 2016)
- Research could be used by advocates





# Thank You

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